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(6) (S) THE ROLES OF PARAMILITARY FORCES IN THE VIETNAMESE INSURGENCY 1960-1965 (U) (8)

A CASE STUDY

(10) by
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Field Artillery

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(U) ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: WILLIAM E. CROUCH, JR., LTC FA

TITLE: The Role of Paramilitary Forces in the Vietnamese
Insurgency 1960-1965

FORMAT: Case Study

This case study begins with a discussion of

This case study discusses the roles of the paramilitary forces in Vietnam during the 1960-1965 time frame. As a point of departure the Communist insurgent organizational structure in the Republic of South Vietnam, ~~is discussed.~~ The purpose for this review was to bring into focus the basic problems the South Vietnamese government forces faced in combatting the insurgent movement. Paramilitary forces are ideally suited to combat insurgency at the base of its very strength--the populace. Paramilitary forces are found at this 'grass roots' level and if properly motivated, equipped, and led can materially aid in the total counterinsurgency effort. In Vietnam the Popular Forces, Regional Forces, and to a lesser extent, the Civilian Irregular Defense Group were not integrated into the total military effort during the period covered by this study. Responsibility for this failure can be traced to the early USMAAG concepts that internal security was a police function, and to training the ARVN to fight a conventional war.

(U) PREFACE

This Case Study was produced under the aegis of the US Army Combat Development Command Institute of Land Combat (Provisional) at Carlisle Barracks. The general scope of the study was delineated by USACDCILC (Prov). The case study is intended to be used by the Institute in conjunction with other case studies to aid and support a specialized research effort by the Institute. Input will be made to the Army Roles, Missions, and Doctrine in Low Intensity Conflict Study (ARMLIC). The ARMLIC study will polarize the interaction of the political, economic, social, psychological, scientific-technological, and military factors in selected nations which lead to insurgency.

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CHAPTER 1 (U)

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The United States Army has been involved in the counterinsurgency operations in the Republic of Vietnam since July 1950.¹ Starting with a modest involvement of a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), US Army forces grew to a peak strength of over 543,000 ground combat forces in 1967. Today we are faced with massive resistance throughout this nation regarding our involvement in South Vietnam. This resistance undoubtedly led the President to promulgate the Nixon Doctrine which states, in part, that the nations of the world must undertake responsibility for their own internal defense. The United States cannot undertake the awesome responsibility of being the world's policeman. The Vietnamization program and the subsequent withdrawal of United States military forces from Vietnam will place the burden of countering the insurgent activities squarely on the shoulders of the Government of South Vietnam. If the United States has had a measure of success in bringing to South Vietnam a more effective administration, a dedicated civilian government mindful of the needs of the people, and an effective military force, it will become apparent in the years ahead.

¹Bernard B. Fall, The Two Vietnams: A Political and Military Analysis (1967), p. 219.

THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the organization, effectiveness, and evolution of the paramilitary forces of South Vietnam during the 1960-1965 period. The effects of economic, political, social, and psychological factors will be discussed only as to the extent each played regarding the roles and missions of the paramilitary forces. Specific attention will be devoted to the concept of utilization of paramilitary forces by the US and to their training.

RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

This case study involved primarily an analysis of various publications that have been written on the war in South Vietnam. Particular attention was devoted to the study of the US MAAG and US MACV operational reports and to the reports prepared by various independent research organizations. While interviews with military personnel who had served in Vietnam and who had been engaged in the training and employment of the paramilitary forces were considered desirable, the limited time available for the case study did not permit this approach. Consideration was given to using a questionnaire technique which would be given to fellow classmates at the Army War College; however, the approach was rejected as most students had served in Vietnam after 1965 during the period of maximum American involvement.

SCOPE

The study is limited to the 1960-1965 period. It was during this time that the United States was engaged primarily in the advisory and training roles in Vietnam. The period prior to 1960 for purposes of the ARMLIC Study is designated the preconflict phase, and has been previously studied by the US Army Combat Developments Command Institute of Land Combat (USACDCILC). After 1965 the insurgent action grew into a limited war with the commitment of large US forces. This study will be used in conjunction with other studies to support the USACDCIAS study; Army Roles, Missions and Doctrine in Low Intensity Conflict (ARMLIC).

CHAPTER II (U)

INSURGENT DOCTRINE AND ORGANIZATION

GENERAL BACKGROUND

Dien Bien Phu marked the beginning of the end for French colonialism in Southeast Asia. It also marked the beginning of a well-conceived plan by Ho Chi Minh and the leaders of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to take over and "reunite" all of Vietnam under Communist ideology. The settlement at Geneva called for a Vietnam divided at the 17th parallel and provided for a general election to be held in 1956 to decide the will of the people based on democratic processes. It is important to note that the Geneva declaration was an unsigned document.¹

As to why the Communists accepted the unsigned document, this remains to this day an unsolved question. Some authorities believe that the two-year provision for free elections was a face-saving device for the West since South Vietnam was expected to collapse. Others hold that Hanoi accepted the Accord knowing that it would never be implemented.²

The Geneva declaration also included the provision for civilians living in an area controlled by one party to voluntarily move to the

¹Bernard B. Fall, Viet-Nam Witness (1967), p. 75.

²Ibid., pp. 75-76.

area controlled by the other party. Provisions were also included to control troop movements through each other's area.³ However, it was the provision for inter-area movement of civilians that was to become the heart of the insurgent actions in South Vietnam and served to illustrate the careful advanced planning conducted by the Hanoi leadership. At that time there were some 860,000 refugees--more than 500,000 of them were Catholics--who began moving into South Vietnam. As the French and Vietnamese troops moved southward, many of the Vietnamese soldiers deserted rather than leave their families. Concurrently, in the South some 80,000 local guerrillas and regulars with their dependents were moving northward.⁴

According to Fall:

Perhaps another 5,000 to 6,000 local hard-core guerrillas--probably the elite of the Viet-Minh's military and political operators in the South--simply went underground. They hid their weapons and radio equipment and became anonymous villagers--at least for awhile. In the cities, others such as the Viet Cong's present leader, Nguyen-Huu Tho, created "legal struggle" organizations with the aim of propagating the new catch-phrase of "peace and reunification in two years".⁵

So the stage was set for future violence. These hard-core Viet-Minh who remained behind in South Vietnam melted into the populace, gaining their confidence, their friendship, eating their rice, helping work their fields, living with the peasant, and all

³Ibid., p. 72.

⁴Ibid., p. 76.

⁵Ibid.

the while reminding them of the social and economic injustices that were prevalent under the regime of Ngo Nguyen Diem and his family. The acts of terrorism did not begin until later.

On 11 July 1957 a group of armed men machine-gunned to death seventeen occupants of a bar in Chan-Doc, South Vietnam. On 14 September the district chief of My-Tho and his entire family were stopped in broad daylight on a main highway and killed in cold blood. On 10 October a bomb thrown into a cafe in Saigon's Chinatown Cholon wounded thirteen persons, including two plainclothes Security Police members. On 22 October thirteen American servicemen were injured in three bombings directed against military installations in Saigon.⁶

During the years since the signing of the Geneva Accords the Communists had been busy organizing their insurgent forces, intensifying their propaganda campaigns against the Americans and the hated Diem government. They had won widespread support among the peasants and were ready to embark on an even greater scale their insurgent operation to reunite Vietnam. This required that their shadow organization be enlarged and brought into the open.

The Third Congress of the Dang Lao Dong Party (Vietnamese Workers' Party) took place in September 1960. During the Congress, Hanoi declared its intention to openly involve itself in the conflict to liberate South Vietnam.⁷ The task was declared to be "a

⁶Ibid., p. 160.

⁷American University, The Communist Insurgent Infrastructure in South Vietnam: A Study of Organization and Strategy (1966), p. 15.

protracted, hard, complex process of struggle of great activity and flexibility, ranging from lower to higher, and taking as its basis the building, consolidation, and development of the revolutionary power of the masses."⁸

On 19 December 1960 a group of representatives of the various opposition groups in South Vietnam met north of Saigon. As a result of this meeting the National Liberation Front was founded and proclaimed to exist as of 20 December 1960.⁹

At this time the organizational structure established by the Communists consisted of three major components:

1. The Civil organization (NFL),
2. A composite armed force, and

3. The Peoples Revolutionary Party (PRP). As is the case in Communist organizations, the party retained the dominant role. It provided direction, control, and supervision; made policies; and planned the strategies.¹⁰ Figure 1 shows the interrelationships of these three parallel structures--party, civil, and military.¹¹ The figure depicts a typical Communist insurgent organization and is varied as to detail but not as regards function. In the South Vietnam situation a regional or interprovincial organization was established above province level.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Fall, The Two Viet-Nams, p. 362.

¹⁰American University, p. 17.

¹¹Ibid., p. 19.

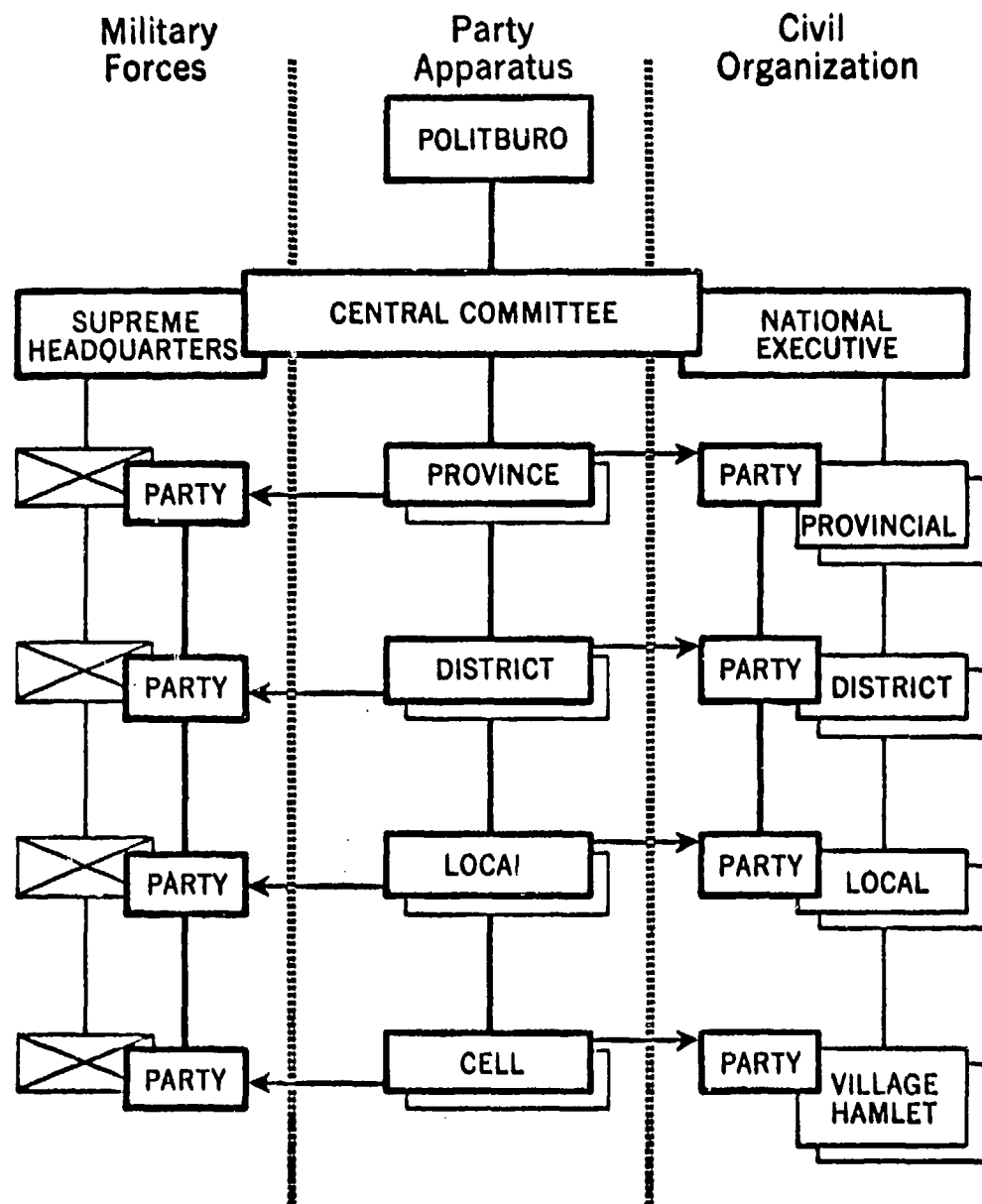


Figure 1. MODEL COMMUNIST INSURGENT ORGANIZATION

The Dang Lao Dong (DLD) had previously drawn up a blueprint for a territorial party hierarchy in South Vietnam in competition with the legal South Vietnamese Government. At the highest level, an alleged National Congress of Representatives and a Central Executive Committee were said to exist.¹² Below this national level organizations paralleling those of the government of South Vietnam existed down to town or village level. The interprovincial commands were responsible to no mythical South Vietnamese "National Congress," but rather to the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN), an agency of the Communist North Vietnamese Central Committee's "Reunification Department," located in Hanoi.¹³ Thus COSVN was, in fact, a direct control mechanism emanating directly from Hanoi.

INTERPROVINCIAL ORGANIZATION

The interprovincial organization consisted of party members supposedly selected by the elected officials of the provinces, who, in turn, exercised their authority based on the results of district, village, and hamlet party chapters. This organization is shown in Figure 2.¹⁴ At each level the committees had three elements; the committee Secretary and his assistant, a permanent standing committee, and various staff sections. These staff sections consisted of the administrative branch, the communications and liaison element,

¹²Ibid., p. 25.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 26.

the intelligence/security apparatus, medical and dispensary facilities, the training and propaganda agency, the enemy troop and civilian propaganda section, and the economics agency.¹⁵

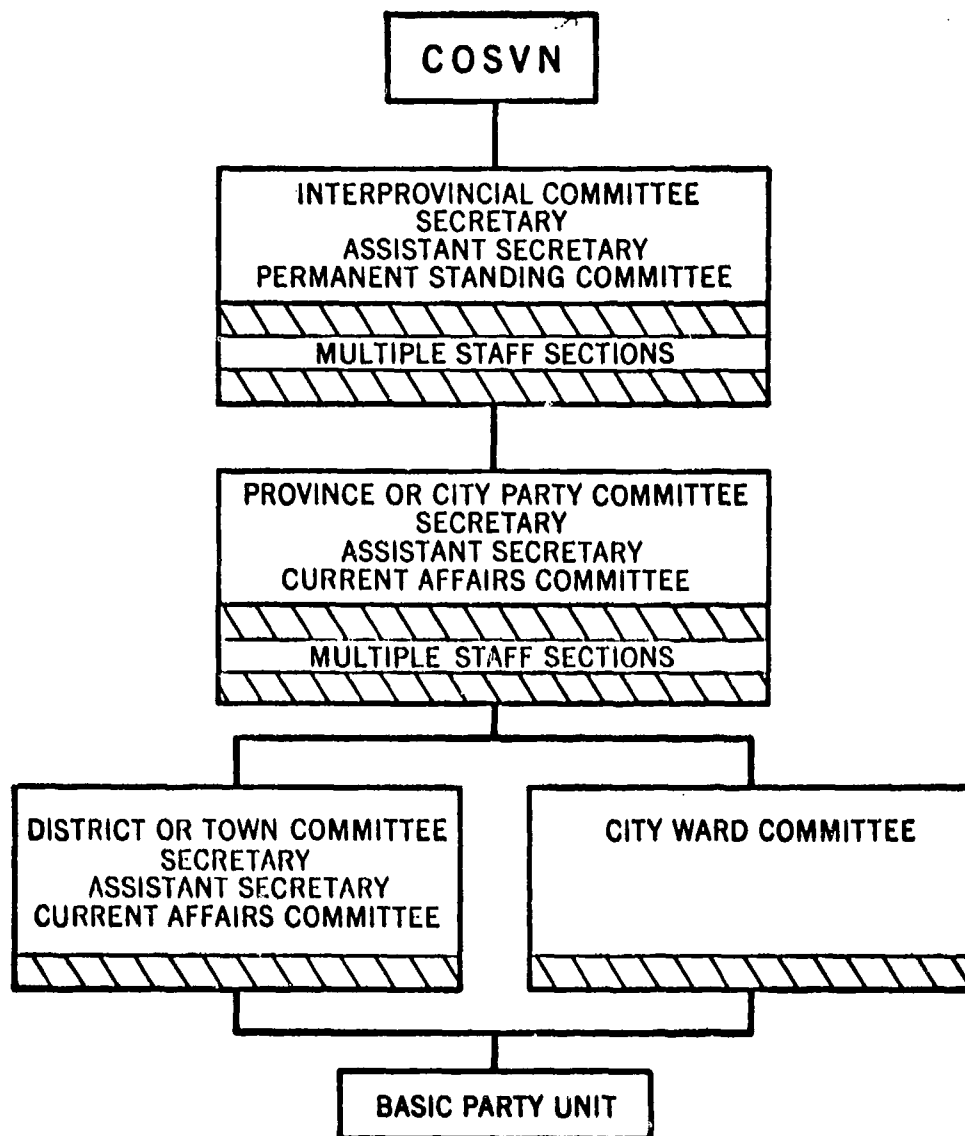


Figure 2. VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST COMMITTEE
(BUREAUCRATIC) SYSTEM

¹⁵Ibid., p. 27.

The roles of each of these subordinate staff sections (with the exception of the administrative branch whose function is a conventional one) will be briefly described to illustrate their basic functions. It must be emphasized that similar agencies extended all the way down to village and hamlet level.

Communications and Liaison

Detailed procedures and formalized arrangement were established and a formal regulation regarding contacts was instituted to insure the success of communications.

Detailed stipulations governed the activities of courier and protection personnel, from attire and comportment and the extent of their knowledge to the routes to be employed and the weaponry to be used. Once on the move, travel must be minutely scheduled. Anything wrong in this schedule should put the cadre at home on guard against capture of the cadre concerned by the enemy.¹⁶

As time passed the Communists obtained limited radio, wire, and telecommunications equipment to assist in internal command and control as well as making it possible to broadcast propaganda directly to the South Vietnamese populace.

Intelligence/Security Apparatus

The security specialists were highly trained in all facets of clandestine behavior: how to set up secret rendezvous; how to relocate contact centers; and above all, to use discretion. Their leaders reasoned "the Enemy's eyes and ears can be covered only if the people are thoroughly trained in preserving secrecy; only in

¹⁶Ibid.

this way can the party's agencies and cadre be covert."¹⁷ One party training pamphlet defined the word "counterespionage" as--

. . . consisting of basic education making our own people aware of the enemy's goals, consolidating ties between the party and the people, training the people to enforce security measures, and urging the people to uncover spies who try to collect intelligence and win our cadre over to their side.

In training the people, cadres should remain composed, never panic, be neither pessimistic nor subjective, and insist on a security enforcement policy.¹⁸

Additional functions of the intelligence agency were those of thought control and the development of intelligence networks. It reported on speeches given by party members as well as the people in the villages. Elaborate systems were established to promote defense against penetration by the government's military forces.

Training and Propaganda Agency

This section generated propaganda and conducted political and ideological indoctrination and party training courses. As the conscience and trainer of the party membership it reeducated those party members found wanting in ideology. It conducted training, distributed magazines and posters, made motion pictures, and conducted antipropaganda campaigns against the propaganda efforts of the South Vietnamese Government.¹⁹

¹⁷Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 28-29.

Enemy Troop and Civilian Propaganda Section

The enemy and troop and civilian propaganda (ETCP) section operated through a myriad of organizations erected within the civilian population (and clandestinely within security forces).²⁰ Its mission was to solidify proinsurgent sympathies among the population.

Psychological operations, for the Communist, are inseparable from organization. Those convinced will be organized, and organization means activity. One is to act as a member of a group and in a manner which accords with the beliefs one has accepted. The individual enlisted in the activities of a mass organization will gradually acquire a vested interest in the fortunes of the organization to which he belongs precisely because of the effort he expects in behalf of that body. In South Vietnam, the attempt was made to draw up a list of categories calculated to make every individual resistant in the area. Subject to organizational work, whether it was an insurgent-controlled base area, or a marginal zone for which the opposing forces were contending, or a hostile area clearly dominated by counterinsurgent security forces.²¹

These organized groups were then further organized into multiple organizations and representatives chosen to represent them at higher-level or inter-level meetings. These popular organizations were next drawn together at hamlet, village, district, and province and gave proof that (1) the NFL represented the will of the Vietnamese people in the south, and (2) justified its unilateral determination to "legislate" for the country at large.²²

²⁰Ibid., p. 30.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., p. 31.

Economics Agency

The economics agency became operational only in the Communist-dominated areas. It was responsible for the allocation and distribution of funds obtained from North Vietnam, for the preparation of plans for production as well as the control of production by subordinate elements. It was also responsible for the management of crops and control, distribution, and storage of supplies.

PROVINCE, DISTRICT, AND VILLAGE PARTY ORGANIZATION

The party organization at levels below that of the interprovincial level closely paralleled the organization discussed previously. These organizations, at the operating level, were perhaps more critical in nature due to the requirement to provide command and control to various elements that executed the orders from higher headquarters. The functional elements or agencies were essentially the same as previously enumerated with the exception that it was at the province level that control of the insurgent's armed forces emanated. At each succeeding lower level in the party hierarchy greater flexibility in organization was the rule.

CIVIL ORGANIZATION

The People's Revolutionary Party (PRP) developed a civilian organization which paralleled that of the party organization as was shown in Figure 1. The populace of South Vietnam was, generally

speaking, totally indifferent to either the Saigon government or the Communist insurgents. However, the insurgents set out to: (1) maintain their support through the formation and direction of mass organizations; (2) draw more of the population into these organizations, and (3) neutralize support for government pacification efforts.²³ The intent behind the organization of the civilian population was to build a mass hierarchical structure which would be functional at each level from hamlet to interprovincial.

The Communists in South Vietnam employed three basic types of mass organizations in their efforts to overthrow the legally constituted government: (1) popular organizations, (2) special-interest groups, and (3) guerrilla self-defense units. These three groups were then brought together in the People's Liberation Committees (PLC).

The popular organizations were the most significant of the three groups mentioned earlier. These organizations included: The Liberation Labor Association, the Liberation Women's Association, the Liberation Farmer Association, the Liberation Youth Association, the South Vietnam Vanguard Youth, and the High School and University Liberation Student Association.²⁴ Through these organizations the Viet Cong (VC) were able to draw widespread support to their cause. The special interest groups included various professional, ethnic

²³Ibid., p. 77.

²⁴Ibid., p. 88.

minority, and religious associations that were either infiltrated, or established outright by the insurgents.

The insurgent paramilitary forces were considered to be elite formations among the other mass associations. There were three major elements within these paramilitary forces: (1) the village and hamlet guerrilla or "liberation troops," (2) the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), and (3) the secret of "undercover guerrillas."²⁵ The party considered the latter to be their most important element within their paramilitary organizations. They consisted primarily of younger volunteers who were trained and fought within their local area. The guerrilla, when armed, was a status symbol to the others living within the area. Many members of guerrilla units were also full-fledged party members and were constantly engaged in intelligence and propaganda endeavors.

Once the party gained control of an area, these mass organizations were consolidated under the Peoples' Liberation Committees (PLC). The PLC consisted primarily of non-Communists who were elected by the local citizens and governed the area under Communist domination. However, the party retained ultimate control through the use of party members who had been placed in critical positions throughout the mass organizational structure.²⁶

²⁵Ibid., p. 90.

²⁶Ibid., p. 77.

MILITARY ORGANIZATION

Turning now to the last of the tri-element Communist organizational structures--the military organization. The classic model for the buildup of insurgent military forces calls for: (1) activists to the countryside to form nuclei; (2) recruitment by nuclei to form regional units which first appear as armed propaganda teams; (3) activation of part-time village military and village security squads; (4) withdrawal of seasoned personnel from regional units to form main operations units; and (5) "promotion" of village personnel to maintain the strength levels of regional forces.²⁷

There are four elements within the insurgents' military forces: (1) the People's Army of North Vietnam (PAVN); (2) the main force units; (3) the territorial or regional armies; and (4) the local guerrilla units.²⁸ Initially the PAVN assisted the insurgency in South Vietnam by (1) providing specialists (advisors), (2) forcing the ARVN to commit sizable forces to defense along the northern border, and (3) forcing the Southern leaders to train for the wrong kind of war.²⁹ Later, toward the mid 1960s, growing evidence of direct PAVN participation in the insurgent efforts led to massive US intervention.

²⁷Ibid., p. 119.

²⁸Ibid., p. 117.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 118-119.

Indigenous Military Forces

The insurgent military forces consisted of the main force units, the regional units, and local guerrillas. The main force units were elite, well-trained, disciplined, and well-equipped. Most of the personnel could read and write and many were party members. A significant portion of the main force personnel came from the Southerners who had gone North after the Geneva Accords of 1954 and were subsequently infiltrated to the South. The regional or territorial units were made up of people drawn from the rural population and operated within a specified region--generally within a district or, at the outside, a province. The guerrilla army was made up of villagers who remained within their village subject to the control of the PRP. They were expected to fight on occasion but generally engaged in support activities. The party leadership did not conceive of the village guerrilla as a fighting force as it was more concerned with making them unavailable to the government of South Vietnam.³⁰

Command and Control

Command and control of the insurgent military forces was accomplished through four layers which at the regional level consisted of the interparty committee, the regional (bureaucratic) committee, the military affairs committee (MAC), and the military headquarters.³¹ The interparty committee of course represented

³⁰Ibid., p. 118.

³¹Ibid., p. 127.

COSVN. The interregional committee was responsible for overall coordination of the insurgent effort both military and nonmilitary. The MAC is the party control office at the command and staff level in the military organization and provides the link between the interregional committee and the military headquarters. The only purely military-oriented body in the system is the military headquarters and it is responsible for directing military operations.³² However, within the military headquarters itself, there are two separate yet parallel command channels--one for military and the other for the party.³³

Tactical commands up to regimental level existed within the insurgent military forces and were responsible to coordinate operations of two or more battalions of provincial troops or company/platoon-size forces at district level. A typical organization of a main force battalion is shown in Figure 3.³⁴ It is interesting to note that below squad level the insurgents organized three-man military cells which were similar to the three-man party cell. The military cell was in addition to the three-man party cell. Therefore, at the lowest level it was possible for one individual to belong to two organizations. The hard logic behind this practice reveals typical Communist thinking.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid., p. 146.

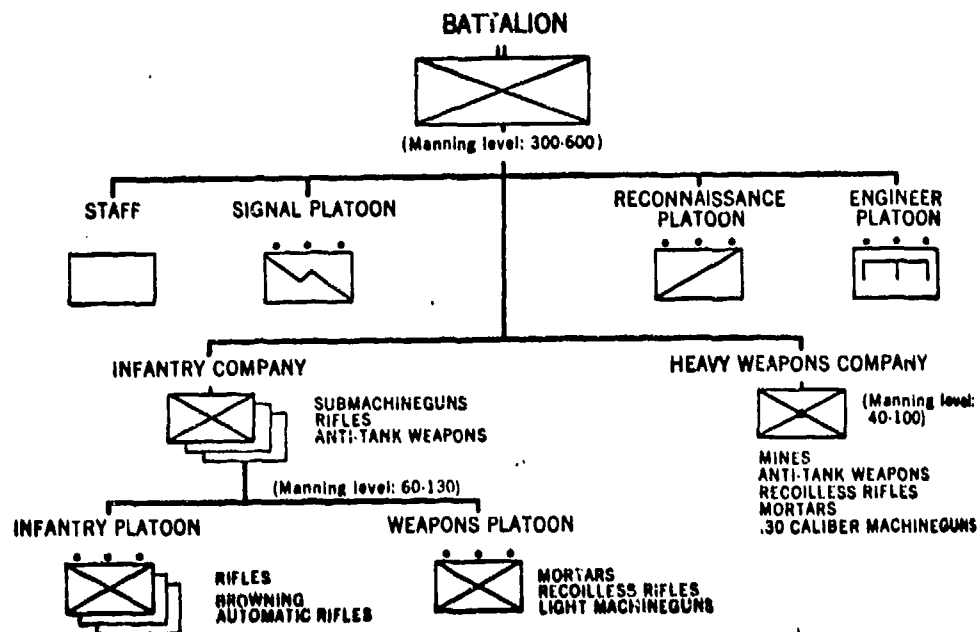


Figure 3. COMPONENT ELEMENTS OF A CHARACTERISTIC MAIN LINE BATTALION

On no occasion was the individual soldier to act independently but always as a member of a group. Such a body or element, the formal institutionalization of the concept of fire and movement or the "buddy" system had immediate, obvious utility in combat. For the Communist, however, it had additional importance as a surveillance device and an organization reaffirmation of the principle of "responsibility", inherent to the doctrine of democratic centralism, which compelled the party member to organize those under his control down to the most minute details. Never could a group, even an ad hoc body of varying composition, function (1) in the absence of organization, or (2) without a formally designated "responsible" leader. Neither spontaneity nor expediency would be tolerated; the variables would be held to a minimum through the structuring of all human situations.³⁵

³⁵Ibid., p. 147.

INSURGENT ORGANIZATION IN PERSPECTIVE

Thus the basic characteristic of the National Liberation Front (NLF) was organization. We, as Americans, no doubt would consider the combined civilian and military organization they formulated as stifling and unwieldy due to our own traditional separation of these two elements. Yet to the Viet Cong there was first the party: everything that came after the party was subservient and as a result of the overwhelming dominance of the party, their organization was efficient. As stated by Pike:

The strength of the NLF was the result of careful organization building, not the product of some unique spirit or elan. The mystique to the degree that it existed and bound together the separate building blocks of the movement, resulted in doctrinational efforts, shared social myths, and leader-led relations. The mystique's functions were, first, identity, stemming from the doctrinal course of the Revolution, the ideology of communism, and the recruitment pattern; and, second, unity, resulting from the nature of the leadership, the indoctrination itself, and individual self-motivating standards or behavior.³⁶

³⁶Douglas Pike, The Viet Cong (1966), p. 377.

CHAPTER III (S)

SOUTH VIETNAM'S PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATIONS (U)

(S) INTRODUCTION (U)

(U) The previous chapter discussed the multiple organization implemented by the National Liberation Front (NLF). The major driving force behind the NLF was organization--organization from top to lowest level--the three-man cell. Closely following organization as a major facet of the Communists was communication. At each level the NLF stressed the importance of communication not only between Communists elements but more importantly communicating with the people. The NLF was most adroit at communicating with the people and in such a way as to gain their confidence and understanding. The evils of the central Government were expounded on a daily basis; converts to the NLF cause begot other converts and provided the Viet Cong (VC) with a large base of sympathetic supporters to their cause.

(U) Whether or not these converts were Communist sympathizers is not important--the significant consideration being the fact that the South Vietnamese Government was unable (or did not care) to counter the organizational efforts of the Viet Cong. Attempts were made in the areas of land reform and restoration of certain civil liberties but were, in general half-hearted and pursued without enthusiasm at the lower levels of government.

(U) While not discounting the social, political, and economic conditions that existed within South Vietnam, this study is concerned with the primary area of paramilitary forces. Paramilitary forces are constituted from indigenous volunteers whose knowledge of the terrain and people is equal to that of the guerrilla.¹ The paramilitary forces would appear to afford a significant barrier to the Communist encroachment by denying them communication with the populace. In addition the paramilitary forces would be in excellent position to effect certain social, political, economic, and civic action programs at the hamlet and village level. Intelligence and counterintelligence functions would be greatly enhanced due to their proximity to the people. However, in Vietnam these potentials were not realized until much too late.

(U) The US Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) was concerned with training the South Vietnamese Regular Army (ARVN) to resist a Korea-like attack by the North Vietnamese across the 17th parallel.² Internal security was considered a police function. Further complicating the issue was the fact that the then existing paramilitary forces--the Civil Guard and the Self-Defense Forces--were placed under the control of the Ministry of Interior and not under the Ministry of Defense. Consequently, had the interest

¹US Department of the Army, Field Manual 31-16: Counter guerrilla Operations (1967), p. 13.

²Fall, The Two Viet-Nams, p. 320.

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existed within MAAG to train and equip the paramilitary forces, it would have been impossible to do so due to restriction of MAP funds. In 1961 the paramilitary forces were assigned to the Ministry of Defense but as a distinct element from the ARVN.³

(S) The paramilitary Civil Guard was established in 1955 followed a year later by the creation of the Self-Defense Corps.⁴ In 1960 each of these organizations had strengths of 50,000. The Civil Guard (redesignated as Regional Forces in 1964) by 1965 had grown to a strength of 94,000. The Self-Defense Corps (redesignated as Popular Forces in 1964) had more than tripled in size to a strength of 172,000.⁵ The mission of these paramilitary forces was basically that of providing internal security and thus freeing the Vietnamese Army (ARVN) for operations against the VC base areas and main force units.

(S) POPULAR FORCES (U)

The Popular Forces (PF), formerly the Self-Defense Corps, was established to provide an organization at village and hamlet level to protect the local populace from terrorism and subversion by the Viet Cong. It is essentially a static force, composed of locally

³Frederick C. Spann, The Role of Paramilitary Forces in Counter-insurgency Operations (U) SECRET (8 April 1966), p. 34.

⁴US Central Intelligence Agency, National Intelligence Survey (U), South Vietnam, General Survey NIS43DGS (RCU) SECRET (1969), p. 127 (hereafter referred to as NIS43DGS).

⁵Ibid., p. 130.

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recruited or conscripted personnel who remained in their home villages and hamlets.⁶ The village being the focal point for local defense. The platoon, consisting of 35 men, forms the principal tactical element at village level, with eleven-men squads being assigned to the hamlet level.⁷ No prescribed allocation existed for PF units, the assignment strengths being based strictly on the local situation.

Early in 1956 effort was initiated to establish a homeguard at village and district level. The people were locally recruited, on a voluntary basis, and served without pay.⁸ They were only partially armed with makeshift weapons (including some old flintlocks), poorly trained, and poorly led. In 1961 these units of the SDC were transferred to the Ministry of Defense and US MAP assistance became available for their improvement. Training programs of six weeks duration were established at Province level to provide initial training. Three weeks of annual refresher training was added later.⁹

The lot of the SDC however did not significantly change. As the VC activity increased during the 1961-1962 period, their casualties increased and desertion rates mounted.¹⁰ The situation

⁶Ibid., p. 141.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Spann, p. 37.

⁹US Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam, Tactics and Techniques of Counter Insurgent Operations (U) CONFIDENTIAL (July 1963), p. 5, Sec. 111D (hereafter referred to as MAAG--Tactics and Techniques).

¹⁰US Defense Intelligence Agency, Military Fact Book on the War in South Vietnam (U) SECRET (January 1966), p. 22 (hereafter referred to as DIA--Military Factbook).

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continued to deteriorate and in 1964 the SDC was redesignated as the Popular Forces (PF). A PF command was established to monitor the administration, training, and logistical support from the national level. Four PF Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ) headquarters were formed to oversee and direct local activities and to coordinate PF participation in joint operations.¹¹ In addition a PF liaison officer was assigned to each ARVN division. Coordination and control of training and operations at sector and subsector was the responsibility of a PF liaison team at the province.¹² PF personnel provided leadership for the platoon and squads with the leadership at subsector and above coming from either ARVN or Regional Forces officer pools.¹³

(C) OPERATIONAL ROLE (U)

The missions of the Popular Forces are to:

provide local security for their village or hamlet

to assist the local populace

to conduct anti-subversive activities

to defend key installations

aid in population and resources control at the village or hamlet.¹⁴

As a result of poor training coupled with inadequate leadership and undoubtedly lack of knowledge, the typical PF soldier was in reality

¹¹Spann, p. 49.

¹²Ibid., pp. 49-50.

¹³Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁴MAAG--Tactics and Techniques, p. 34, Chapter III, Sec. M.

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little more than a gate guard at the entrance to the village or hamlet.¹⁵ They developed a purely defensive attitude whereas, properly led and motivated, by conducting offensive actions such as patrolling and ambushing they could have kept the local VC off-balance. As local inhabitants the PF were in an excellent position to collect intelligence as well as pass on to higher authority the overall status of the village and personal attitudes of its inhabitants. Undoubtedly, this function was occasionally fulfilled; however, there was no positive indication of such being the case in the research literature.

(S) REGIONAL FORCES (U)

The Regional Forces (RF), formerly the Civil Guard, is a uniformed, paid, armed, full-time paramilitary organization that conducts operations at the provincial level. Created in 1955 its primary function was to relieve the ARVN of internal security functions, collect intelligence, and countersubversion.¹⁶ When initially established the CG was ill-armed with a variety of small arms gathered during the Indochina War. After the reassignment to the Ministry of Defense in 1961, US MAP assistance in the form of small arms began to filter through.¹⁷ Training programs of twelve weeks duration for newly activated companies were established at

¹⁵Personal observation of author in RVN August 1964 to July 1965.

¹⁶NIS43DGS, p. 140.

¹⁷Spann, p. 38.

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Training Centers to be followed annually by four weeks of refresher training at local training centers within each province.¹⁸ Concurrently with the reorganization the RF established a similar organization to that of the Popular Forces previously discussed. Four RF Corps Tactical Zones (CTZ) headquarters were established to monitor the administration, training, and logistical support within each ARVN CTZ.¹⁹ The battalion headquarters was abolished and the staff section increased at the province to assist the province chief in command and control of assigned RF units.²⁰

The training of RF personnel, like that of the PF(SDC), was poorly executed. The necessity to provide internal security through a given area drastically restricted training although some very realistic exercises occurred during actual confrontations with the Viet Cong (VC). Increased advisory assistance and US MAP assistance led to improved training and weaponry. Where US advisory effort was strong and the Vietnamese leadership aggressive, the training was effective and the operational aspects of the RF increased accordingly.²¹

(C) OPERATIONAL ROLE (U)

The rifle company formed the basic unit of the Regional Forces. The basic missions of the RF unit was to provide security of critical

¹⁸Ibid., p. 34.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 42.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., pp. 44-45.

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installations and to assist the ARVN in joint operations within the sector or province.²² Regional Forces rifle companies are assigned to subsector level on the basis of the existing situation, i.e., the status of pacification, VC activity, transportation, and other requirements. The RF units further assisted in training the PF in village and hamlet defense.²³ The RF was the next unit above the PF units to provide for intelligence and counterintelligence; however, due to the poor training and leadership that existed during the period under discussion, they were generally ineffective. The Central Government never utilized the full potential of the RF to counter the detailed organization of the insurgents.

(C) US TRAINING FUNCTIONS (U)

As previously discussed the US MAAG concentrated on the training of the ARVN to cope with a Korea-like attack across the 17th parallel. Scant attention was given to the problem of internal security. The US advisors considered internal security to be a police function. Further complicating any US assistance to the paramilitary forces was their assignment to the Ministry of the Interior which automatically prohibited their receipt of US MAP funds until their transfer to the Ministry of Defense in 1961.²⁴ In late 1961 Lieutenant

²²US MAAG--Tactics and Techniques, pp. 1-2, Chapter III, Sec. M.

²³Ibid.

²⁴US Military Assistance Advisory Group, Report of Chief, MAAG, Vietnam CONFIDENTIAL (1961), p. 2.

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General McGarr stated the requirement to realign the efforts of the US MAAG in Vietnam from that of formulating the capability to combat internal subversion. He redirected ARVN training and operations toward counter guerrilla and incorporated the paramilitary forces.²⁵ It is clear from General McGarr's remarks that the requirements to improve the quality and quantity of the paramilitary forces was recognized as early as late 1961. Training centers were established but the exigencies of the war, the ensuing rapid turnover of leadership in the Central Government, and the lack of a "sense of urgency" all contributed to an ineffective program. The increase in advisor strength in 1964 and 1965 came too late; the Viet Cong were firmly entrenched in the countryside.²⁶

²⁵Ibid., p. 6.

²⁶Howard C. Jelinek, LTC, Popular Forces--The Indispensible Link Between the Government and the People of South Vietnam (1 February 1970), p. 1.

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CHAPTER IV (S)

THE CIVILIAN IRREGULAR DEFENSE GROUP (U)

(S) DEVELOPMENT (U)

The Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) program was begun in the central highlands of South Vietnam in late 1961. It was formed to regain control of strategically important sections of the country that were threatened by the Viet Cong and not dealt with by the ARVN.¹ Other aspects of the CIDG program included the requirement to disrupt VC activities, reduce local support to the VC, and develop a measure of self-protection for isolated family groups.² The CIDG program was initiated as a separate, United States-sponsored and -financed, effort to assist the Government of South Vietnam (GVN) in gaining the support of the ethnic minorities in the remote areas of the country. An underlying reason behind the program was the prevention of the ethnic minorities from aligning with the VC and to exploit their paramilitary potential for area control and border surveillance.³ The US Special Forces had the responsibility for

¹US Department of the Army, Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations, Debriefing of Senior and Designated Key Officers Returning from Field Assignments (U) SECRET (25 February 1964), Report by Colonel George C. Morton, p. 39 (hereafter referred to as Morton--Debriefing).

²Ibid.

³Spann, p. 56.

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operational and training assistance to the Vietnamese Special Forces Command for the program. On 1 July 1963 the US Forces assumed full responsibility for the program.⁴

The ultimate aim of the CIDG program was to involve every inhabitant of remote areas in the total counterinsurgency effort based on the philosophy that the most effective paramilitary force is based upon the willing support of the local population.⁵ The basic concept regarding US participation in the CIDG program was stated by CINCPAC in May 1963 as follows:

Concept: The basic US objective in supporting them is to assist the RVN (Republic of Viet-Nam) in developing a closely knit paramilitary capability whose loyalty is contested by the Viet Cong. The CIDG Program is an offensive against the Viet Cong designed to expand and recover both people and territory from VC domination, develop a sense of national loyalty among the participating ethnic groups, improve their morale and well-being and by so doing counter communist insurgency. The CIDG personnel are recruited from, but not limited to, primitive tribes and minority groups in remote areas where there is little if any government presence or control and the sovereignty of the RVN is not fully recognized. They complement the operations of other RVN military and paramilitary forces under the National Campaign Plan by clearing, holding, and expanding specified area-development centers. US personnel achieve the desired results in cooperation with GVN personnel by employing paramilitary, medical, economic, and psychological techniques in the process of motivating; arming, training, advising, supporting, and assisting these groups. When the GVN is able to assume full responsibility for the CIDG and success is assured, the US personnel will be withdrawn. As the National Campaign progresses the CIDG are demobilized or absorbed into other paramilitary or military forces.⁶

⁴Ibid., pp. 56-57.

⁵Frederick H. Stires, The US Special Forces CIDG Mission in Viet Nam: A Preliminary Case Study in Counterpart and Civil Military Relationships (U) (SECRET) (1964), p. 18.

⁶Ibid., pp. 19-20.

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The first village selected for the CIDG program was Buon Enao, located 12 kilometers from Ban Me Thout, the capital of Darlac Province. Buon Enao was to serve as the base with subsequent outward expansion to secure the remainder of the province.⁷ As a result of this initial effort it was determined that the Montagnards, if properly trained and armed, would willingly defend their villages against VC attacks and that the tribes would identify themselves with the national government thereby contributing to the overall counter-insurgency effort.⁸

(S) TRAINING (U)

(S) The training of the CIDGs was conducted along the lines of the "oil slick" concept and often under extremely realistic conditions. A CIDG Area Development Center (ADC) is first established in a secure area according to the first-hand report of Colonel Morton.

The base is usually commanded by an ARVN Special Forces officer advised and assisted by US Special Forces. Training of CIDG Hamlet Militia is conducted by UN Special Forces and the paramilitary cadre from the base area. From the base visits are made to surrounding hamlets which are encouraged to join the program. The Strike Force is used to secure a hamlet while a few hamlet militia are trained at the base: after this training they are issued weapons. Upon the return of these trained and armed men, the hamlet assumes the responsibility for its own defense, but in cases where it is attacked the defenders may ask for additional help from the

⁷Ibid., p. 24.

⁸Ibid., pp. 28-29.

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centrally located Strike Force. Civic action and psychological operations are conducted throughout the period of area development, and an effort is made to generate an awareness of the RVN governmental structure with a view toward the eventual integration into a peaceful RVN economic pattern.⁹

(U) The Strike Force training consists of from four to eight weeks, depending upon the assimilation capability of the trainees, and stresses small unit tactics and weaponry.¹⁰ The training cycle is followed by advanced "practical" training in the vicinity of the ADC and includes reconnaissance and intelligence patrols and ambushes. As military proficiency increases, long-range patrols are conducted throughout the area.¹¹

(S) OPERATIONS (U)

(S) As training progresses and more and more hamlets join in the Area Defense Complex (following the oil-slick concept), the entire ADC is linked into an integrated defense. The Strike Force units conduct mid- and long-range patrols operating on the "one-third" principle--one-third in base camp and close-in surveillance, one-third on mid-range patrol, and the remainder on long-range missions--; many of the operations are conducted at night. Other CIDG units are assigned responsibility to Border Surveillance missions to intercept and destroy infiltrators.¹²

⁹Morton--Debriefing, p. 39.

¹⁰James Farmer, Counterinsurgency: Principles and Practices in Vietnam (1964), pp. 7-8.

¹¹Spann, p. 59.

¹²Ibid., pp. 62-63.

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(C) The responsibility for Border Surveillance was assigned to the US Special Forces in late 1963. This program had been started in mid 1962 and was placed under the operational control of the Combined Studies Division (CSD) of MACV. Units assigned to this mission were called "Trailwatchers" and later "Mountain Scouts." These units were responsible for reconnaissance and gathering intelligence along the borders of Laos and Cambodia. When merged in 1963 the border surveillance sites were considered as CIDG projects with the additional mission of providing border surveillance. Civic action programs and psychological operations were undertaken to bring the local populace under GVN influence as well as to improve the economy and living conditions. The CIDG program and the border surveillance sites were to be demobilized by integration into the Vietnamese Armed Forces.¹³

¹³Stires, pp. 34-35.

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CHAPTER V (S)

ANALYSIS OF THE PARAMILITARY FORCES (U)

(S) RELATIONSHIP TO CIVILIAN POPULACE (U)

(U) The National Liberation Front (NLF) undertook a meticulous program to bring the populace of South Vietnam totally under their domination. As discussed in Chapter II their organization and communication complexes were aimed at the "grass roots" of this population--the peasants living in villages and hamlets throughout the countryside. Through a range of measures open to them from friendly persuasion to overt terror, the VC were able to influence the hearts and minds of the people. The Government of South Vietnam, on the other hand, was busy managing the mundane affairs of a sagging regime. According to Galula, the first law of counterinsurgency warfare is: "The support of the population is as necessary for the counterinsurgent as for the insurgent."¹ The Diem regime made attempts to bring about a better life for the peasants such as land reform, educational projects, and the strategic hamlet for example. The lack of effective political administrators below the Saigon level doomed to failure these programs from inception.

¹David Galula, Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice (1964), p. 74.

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(S) The initial US military program in Vietnam was, as previously stated, the training of the regular forces for Korean-styled conflict across the 17th parallel. This emphasis was changed in late 1961 to counterinsurgency tactics. A potentially significant contribution to the efforts of pacification was overlooked when various paramilitary forces were not trained, received little equipment, and in reality not paid for their services. The Popular Forces served as the front line troops in much of the war effort since they were the most immediate respondents to the VC attacks.² They, along with the Regional Forces to a lesser extent, were the targets of the hit-and-run tactics used so effectively by the Viet Cong. The Popular Forces absorbed more than 40 percent of the casualties and had a desertion rate nearly twice that of the ARVN and Regional Forces together.³ Many times the desertion was in reality what the US military would refer to as "absence without leave" (AWOL). The RF/PF soldier had gone home to assist his family in planting or harvesting the rice crop or even joined another unit to be closer to his family.

(FOUO) In a study conducted for the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), representatives of the Simulmatics Corporation interviewed several hundred RF/PF soldiers, members of their

²William A. Nighswonger, Rural Pacification in Viet Nam: 1962-1965 (1966), p. 177.

³Spann, p. 53.

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families, and village officials. It was learned that the success of the PF was influenced to a great extent by the sympathy and active support of the villagers. Also, support by the PF in various civic action programs begot additional help from the villagers. The active cooperation of the villagers provided support of military operations, but perhaps more importantly, provided intelligence, contributed to morale and well-being of both the villagers and the RF/PF, and helped eliminate the VC infrastructure.⁴ The study goes on to state that the RF/PF soldier was less interested in killing the Viet Cong or destroying their infrastructure than in simply keeping their activity to a level that would allow his family to maintain its status quo. The typical RF/PF acted just like the peasant he was before joining the paramilitary forces.⁵

(C) The CIDG forces enjoyed a closer relationship with the members of their villages than did the RF/PF. In this US-sponsored program a locally trained cadre was formed which in turn trained other members of the village in small unit tactics. Further, the US personnel worked through the tribal leadership which in the ethnic minorities was a strong and decisive force. A third factor supporting the success of this paramilitary force was their employment only within their home area.⁶ Thus, a closer bond existed

⁴Phillip Worchel, et al., Final Report, A Socio-Psychological Study of Regional-Popular Forces in Vietnam (FOUO) (1967), p. 22.

⁵Ibid., p. 24.

⁶Roswell B. Wing and Richard P. Joyce, Mobilization and Utilization of Ethnic Minority Groups for Counterinsurgency (U) (CONFIDENTIAL) (1965), pp. 15-16.

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between the CIDG and the villagers due in part to the reasons just enumerated but perhaps to a larger extent on the fact that self-defense was the only means of protection available.

(S) RELATIONSHIP TO SOUTH VIETNAMESE
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES (U)

(S) The RF/PF and their forerunners, the CG and SDC, were largely a stepchild from their inception. Prior to 1961 these paramilitary forces were assigned to the Ministry of the Interior and not infrequently responded to orders directly from the presidential level. There was little enthusiasm on the part of the US MAAG in the late 1950s and early 1960s for the potential impact that these forces could have had in countering the insurgency because of the emphasis placed on Korean-style conflict. Funds could not be made available for training and reequipping due to their location under the Ministry of Interior. In late 1961 recognition of their potential began to surface, albeit too little and too late. The pay and allowances of the paramilitary forces were very small compared to that of the ARVN. Initially the PF personnel sewed without compensation. In 1964 the GVN raised the pay and granted certain benefits for the paramilitary forces. Yet in November of that year the increase had not reached the troops.⁷

⁷Jean S. Mintz, Vietnam: A Survey of Military and Non-Military Activities (U) SECRET (1965), p. 9.

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In the case of personnel wounded or killed in action, little or no benefits were forthcoming to support the family during the period of hospitalization or to insure payments to the widow and family.

No man who constantly feels aggravated at receiving lower pay while doing most of the fighting who knows that if wounded in action he will have to fend for himself, and who knows that if he is killed his family will have no income, is likely to fight wholeheartedly, whatever his commitment to a cause.⁸

(U) There have been instances of Province and District Chiefs misusing the paramilitary forces by removing them from the villages or other vital defensive areas and using them for special missions. Following their assignment to the Ministry of Defense in 1964 cases of Popular Forces being repositioned by ARVN commanders occurred. This left their prime function of protecting their village unfulfilled.⁹ Nighswonger quotes a USOM representative as having reported on "the propensity of the ARVN Battalion in Trang Bang district to sit on its collective duff while using Regional Forces and Popular Forces for search and clear operations."¹⁰

(S) Colonel George C. Morton expressed a similar viewpoint when he commented on instances of unwillingness or incompetence of the Vietnamese Special Forces to conduct training exercises or operations. Again a major stumbling block in many cases were

⁸Ibid., pp. 9-10.

⁹Nighswonger, p. 177.

¹⁰Ibid.

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restrictions imposed by Province Chiefs.¹¹ The initial CIDG experiment at Buon Enao called for the turnover of the village complex to control of the South Vietnamese government. The Chief of Darlac Province could not support the turnover. The government broke previously made promises and overbearing attitudes on the part of GVN officials, seriously eroding the effectiveness of this particular milestone. The effects were reflected some 18 months after the turnover by the Montagnard revolt of September 1964.¹² Thereafter, there was an unwillingness on the part of the CIDG to be transferred or integrated into the ARVN or the paramilitary forces.

(U) The paramilitary forces of South Vietnam, during the period of this study, were treated as "country cousins" by the Government of South Vietnam. These were the forces on the scene at hamlet and village level defending their fellow villagers against the VC attacks. Almost unrecognized by their government, poorly trained, poorly equipped, and poorly reimbursed, these are the forces that absorbed most of the casualties during this five-year period and born the brunt of the insurgent's efforts. Perhaps history will state that they bought time for the remainder of the counterinsurgency effort to become aligned in an integration of resources.

¹¹Morton--Debriefing, p. 39.

¹²Wing and Joyce, pp. 12-13.

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(U) EFFECTIVENESS OF PARAMILITARY FORCES

The measurement of effectiveness of the paramilitary forces during the 1960-1965 time frame would most certainly be a divergent task. Thousands of newspaper, weekly news magazines, and official publications have carried articles relating to the cowardice or ranging to the unselfish bravery of these forces. Countless other versions are available through returnees from Vietnam. A recapitulation of these views would be interesting yet in the final analysis would not relate to any degree of valid effectiveness measure. Throughout this study the various references have pointed to the varying degrees of success enjoyed or missed by the United States and the South Vietnamese military forces in combatting the insurgency. One has only to look at recent history from mid 1965 and judge for himself the relative effectiveness of these efforts brought into being by the highest levels of political authority. Certainly the commitment of US military forces on a large scale was the "ultimate" gesture to stem the rising tide of insurgency and to bring peace to Vietnam.

Based on the contents of this study, it would be reasonable to state that the paramilitary forces met with something less than complete success in defending the peasant against the well-entrenched and well-organized insurgent. Yet they are not to be condemned for that they failed to do--rather, the members of the bureaucracy are responsible. Given adequate training and weapons,

adequate pay, survivor and hospitalization benefits for their families, a system of recognition for their efforts, an advancement or promotion system, and a thorough indoctrination into the goals of counterinsurgency and pacification, these paramilitary forces could have played a very effective role in the total effort. However they, many times alone, defended the countryside and its inhabitants while the GVN and the US advisors were awakening to the real threat--removal of the insurgents' organization and eliminating the communication network between the insurgent and the populace.

CHAPTER VI (S)

CONCLUSIONS (U)

(U) Victory against an insurgency can only be achieved by the total integration of the political, economic, social, psychological, and military elements at the national level. The government must eliminate the prime source of the insurgent's power--the people. This does not mean eliminate in the harsh and permanent fashion of the dictator but rather eliminate through certain civil, political, and economic reforms the injustices heaped upon the shoulders of the population. The words and ideology of the insurgent will then fall upon deaf ears; he will be separated from his manpower base, his source of food, and other logistical necessities of battle, and his source of intelligence. Without the support of the people the insurgent cannot survive; with this support he can stand against the mightiest of modern military power.

(U) This study addressed only a portion of the military aspects of the counterinsurgency effort in Vietnam during 1960-1965, specifically the role of the paramilitary forces. These forces, like the populace, were victims of the system. If ineffective, then it was because they were products of an ineffective system. Rather than dwell on the total picture however, this study brought to light several considerations to view with the 20-20 vision perspective of past history.

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(S) The US Military Aid Advisory Group (MAAG) concentrated on the development of the South Vietnamese Regular Army to posture itself to repel an attack across the 17th parallel rather than fight the guerrilla war it would face. The Civil Guard and Self-Defense Forces were not considered in the overall plan. These paramilitary forces were assigned to the Ministry of Interior and consequently ineligible to receive MAP support. Subsequent reassignment to the Ministry of Defense in 1961 did alleviate this facet of the problem to a certain extent. However, the training and equipping of the paramilitary forces was spotty until the 1964-1965 time frame when additional emphasis was given to the program. The US MAAG believed that internal security to be a police function which further hampered the development of the paramilitary forces as an effective counterinsurgency element.

(S) The US-sponsored CIDG Program achieved a measure of success among the ethnic-minority groups. These forces were successful in denying the VC and NVA infiltrators complete freedom of action in the central highlands. However the turnover of these forces to the Vietnamese Government resulted in relocation of units away from their villages with resultant consequences of lowered morale and increased desertion rates. Some units simply refused to serve under the South Vietnamese. Friction between Vietnamese officials and leaders of the minority groups led to a further breakdown of relations.

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(S) The paramilitary forces were not placed on a level with the regular forces until 1964. Consequently they were not integrated into the total insurgency effort and were not under the control of the military region commander. Province and District Chiefs would move the paramilitary forces away from their home areas and use them on clear-and-hold operations or other inappropriate functions.

(S) The training of the paramilitary forces was never a matter of concern to US or South Vietnamese officials. Programs existed as did training centers but the refresher training portion was generally overlooked. These forces were assigned static defense-type missions in the hamlet or village and at vital highway bridges. Offensive actions such as patrolling and ambush were unknown to them.

(U) The use of the paramilitary forces as an exponent of the government's position was ignored during the period under discussion. The daily contact with the village peasants could have provided excellent sounding boards upon which to build confidence, determine the grievances of the people, provide a source of intelligence, and isolate the people from the Viet Cong. Civic action projects were ignored by the paramilitary forces as a rule. Yet in those instances where they helped the villagers, excellent results were attained.

(S) Pay and allowances for these forces were lower than those allocated to the regular forces. Hospitalization and survivors'

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benefits were nonexistent until late 1964 and even after enactment were often held back by government officials. Promotion was essentially nonexistent for the RF or PF. At most he could rise to the lofty position of squad leader or perhaps lead a platoon. These factors of course had a significant effect upon morale and initiative of the individual paramilitary members.

(U) The proper use of the paramilitary forces in Vietnam held the key to counterinsurgency. Yet this source of manpower was largely wasted because of concentration by officials in other areas. The capability of the Communist insurgent to organize and operate with the triple elements of party apparatus, organization, and military forces poses a significant threat to even a strong government. Countering this threat requires the total effort of a nation's resources. Integration of paramilitary forces into the total effort of counterinsurgency would greatly aid in countering the Communist insurgents source of strength--the populace. The paramilitary forces being at the level of these people could have been the most important surgical instrument the South Vietnamese Government used to sever the contact between insurgent and populace. Counterinsurgency can be achieved if you eat, sleep, and work with the people.

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